**From:** Rick Jenkins
**To:** Microsoft ATR
**Date:** 12/6/01 3:41pm
**Subject:** Microsoft monopoly

I'm not sure if you wish to take into account the opinions of a foreigner,
but you can always junk this if not.

Microsoft has a long history of stealing the bulk of its software. Even the
first version of MS/DOS was merely QDOS (Quick and Dirty Operating System), a
microkernel developed for embedded applications, with disk drivers added by
Bill Gates. Hence the emphasis placed on the disk drivers in the name MS/DOS
( MicroSoft Disk Operating System). As far as I am aware, the only company to
win a lawsuit against Microsoft was Stacker, and they were promptly taken
over, lock stock and barrel, by ... Microsoft. Few can afford to oppose a
company with Microsoft's budget. Such theft hampers, or in most cases
prevents, the development of competing software companies.

If mere theft and suppression of competition were the only issues, one might
say that Microsoft was little worse than many other large corporations. A
deeper issue is that the continuing monoculture of operating systems is a
threat to the health of the software industry in general, and to all
industries which rely on computers. Viruses targeted at Microsoft systems can
do immense damage to the entire infrastructure of your nation, by damaging
business records and hindering communication.

There exist no viruses which effectively attack Linux, because security was
considered from the outset of the design, and because problems are rapidly
tackled as soon as they are found; often, an effective patch is freely
available on the internet within hours of the discovery of a problem. This
demonstrates that an operating system, even a popular one, need not display
the extreme vulnerability of  Microsoft's systems.

Unless Microsoft can be spurred to improve its systems, particularly in
respect of security, the U.S. will remain vulnerable. By encouraging their
monopoly position, the D.O.J. is effectively encouraging them to continue to
produce poor, insecure, and excessively vulnerable systems.

It is likely that the U.S. national interest would be well served if real
competition existed in operating system design, so that viruses targeting
particular systems were less effective. At present, there appears some danger
that Microsoft could collapse altogether under the weight of its own
incompetence and complacency, leaving a vacuum which could be filled only by
Linux.  This would lead to another monoculture, admittedly of a much better
quality system, but not necessarily much less dangerous.

I would urge you to reduce the power of Microsoft to dominate the operating
system market, in order that Microsoft may survive.

--
Rick Jenkins <rick@hartmantech.com>
Hartman Technica          http://www.hartmantech.com
Phone +1 (403) 230-1987 voice & fax
221 35 Avenue. N.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 2K5